



CITY OF MENIFEE

SUBJECT: First Reading and Introduction of an Ordinance Establishing Regulations Governing the Possession of Catalytic Converters

MEETING DATE: July 17, 2024

TO: Mayor and City Council

PREPARED BY: Chris Karrer, Police Chief

REVIEWED BY: Chris Karrer, Police Chief

APPROVED BY: Armando G. Villa, City Manager

RECOMMENDED ACTION

1. Introduce an ordinance establishing regulations governing the possession of catalytic converters and adding Chapter 11.55, Unlawful Possession of Catalytic Converters, to Title 11 of the Meniffee Municipal Code.

DISCUSSION

The Meniffee Police Department finds that theft of catalytic converters has been a continuing problem in the City of Meniffee and Riverside County in recent years. In the City, dozens of reports of catalytic converter thefts occur annually impacting our community members. The external location of catalytic converters and the use of valuable precious metals, including rhodium, palladium, and platinum, makes these devices a target for thieves. Individuals in possession of stolen catalytic converters often recycle them for substantial profit, while victims of these thefts suffer the consequences of paying thousands of dollars in repairs, the inconvenience of repairing their vehicles, and feeling unsafe in the community.

Finding the victim of these crimes is extremely difficult due to the manner in which the catalytic converter thefts occur and lack of identifying markers on catalytic converters to link a stolen catalytic converter to the victim. The inability to identify the victims of catalytic converter thefts can inhibit the ability to successfully prosecute individuals for the thefts. This proposed ordinance is necessary to provide the City a means to protect the public, deter this criminal activity, and promote a more productive use of City of Meniffee resources.

The purpose and intent of this proposed ordinance is to curb the theft of catalytic converters throughout the City and to provide the City with reasonable means to address the impact on the community and the victims posed by increasing catalytic converter thefts.

While there have been legislative attempts in Sacramento to crack down on catalytic converter thefts, local agencies in California, and especially Riverside County, have begun to pass similar ordinances to assist law enforcement in holding individuals accountable for their crimes. Similar to the County of Riverside's recently adopted ordinance related to catalytic converter thefts, the City's proposed ordinance establishes that it is unlawful for any person to possess any catalytic converter which is not attached to a vehicle unless the person has verifiable, valid proof of ownership of the catalytic converter.

Violators would be subject to administrative fines consistent with our current fee structure or charged with a misdemeanor crime upon a second offense of having multiple catalytic converters without proof of ownership. Unlawful possession can be inferred based on the quantity of detached catalytic converters in one's possession and/or the condition of the dismantled catalytic converters. This includes, but is not limited to, how the catalytic converters have been detached or cut from vehicles.

STRATEGIC PLAN OBJECTIVE

Safe and Vibrant Community

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with the recommended action. Any potential revenue collected from fines related to the new ordinance would be deposited and reported in the respective fiscal year.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Ordinance